United Nations A/62/219

General Assembly

Distr.: General
10 August 2007

Original: English

Sixty-second session
Item 57 of the provisional agenda*
Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report highlights major results that were achieved during the reporting period in the implementation, under Millennium Development Goal 7 of targets 11 on slum upgrading and 10 on water and sanitation and in slum prevention as recommended in paragraph 56 (m) of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. These targets provide strategic entry points for addressing the twin goals of the Habitat Agenda, namely, "adequate shelter for all" and "sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world".

The first result was the outcome of the twenty-first session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, which adopted several important resolutions. These included landmark resolutions on the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013, the experimental reimbursable seeding operations for financing low-income housing and urban development of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities, and guiding principles on access to basic services for all.

* A/62/150.

07-45650 (E) 280807

The second major result was the outcome of global and regional consultative processes in support of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the attainment of the human settlements-related Millennium Development Goals and internationally agreed development goals.

The third major result was the continued strengthening of working relations with international and regional financial institutions and other donors in pre-investment capacity-building for the scaling up of pilot projects for pro-poor human settlements development.

The report also provides a brief overview of progress in programme implementation and concludes with some recommendations. The recommendations are particularly opportune at the halfway mark for the target dates of the Millennium Development Goals, and at a time when the international community is witnessing the social, economic and environmental consequences of rapid and chaotic urbanization and the plight suffered and shared by 1 billion slum-dwellers around the world. The attainment of the internationally agreed development goals depends increasingly on our collective ability to manage the process of urbanization and to make our cities more sustainable and life therein more equitable.

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1	4
II.	Outcome of the twenty-first session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)	2–30	4
	A. Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013	3–14	4
	B. Strengthening the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation	15–23	6
	C. Other important resolutions adopted by the Governing Council	24–30	7
III.	Global and regional consultative processes	31–62	9
	A. World Urban Forum	31–37	9
	B. Ministerial Conferences on Housing and Urban Development	38–42	10
	C. Commission on Sustainable Development	43–45	10
	D. Collaboration with the regional commissions and other United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies	46–57	11
	E. Africities Summit	58–59	13
	F. World Habitat Day celebrations	60–62	13
IV.	Working with international and regional financial institutions and other partners	63–94	14
	A. Follow-up investment in water and sanitation: working with the African and Asian Development Banks	64–69	14
	B. Mobilizing domestic capital through the Slum Upgrading Facility	70–72	15
	C. The Cities Alliance and Cities without Slums	73–76	16
	D. Working with the European Commission	77	17
	E. The Global Land Tool Network	78–83	17
	F. Working with the private sector	84–89	18
	G. Engaging civil society	90–94	19
V.	Strengthening coordinated humanitarian response and sustainable reconstruction	95–97	19
VI.	Financial and budgetary matters	98–102	20
	A. Resource mobilization	98–99	20
	B. Balance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions	100–101	21
	C. Regular budget contributions	102	21
VII.	Conclusions and recommendations	103–106	22

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/206 of 20 December 2006 entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)". The focus of the report is on progress made in the implementation of that resolution.

II. Outcome of the twenty-first session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

2. The twenty-first session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) was exemplary in many ways. In the spirit of the United Nations reform, its work was streamlined, resulting in a focused and tightly knit agenda, a high degree of coherence between dialogue and debate, and a set of mutually reinforcing resolutions. These included landmark resolutions on the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013,[1] the experimental reimbursable seeding operations for financing low-income housing and urban development of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation,[2] the guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities,[3] and the guiding principles on access to basic services for all.[4]

A. Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013

3. The Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013 was developed in a consultative process pursuant to resolution 20/19 adopted by the Governing Council at its twentieth session.[5] That resolution called for a sharply focused and results-based plan and a resource mobilization strategy, with a view to enhancing the impact and catalytic role of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda[6] and the attainment of human settlements-related targets of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

4. Major areas of emphasis of the Plan include: programme alignment and cohesion, particularly between normative and operational activities; results-based monitoring and reporting; a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy; knowledge management; and the strengthening of partnerships, particularly with international and regional financial institutions, so as to leverage and combine technical cooperation activities at the country level with follow-up investment.

---

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second session, Supplement No. 8* (A/62/8), annex I, sect. B, resolution 21/2.

[2] Ibid., resolution 21/10.

[3] Ibid., resolution 21/3.

[4] Ibid., resolution 21/4.

[5] Ibid., *Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 8* (A/60/8), annex I, sect. B.

[6] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 2006* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.IV.6), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

5. The Plan's overarching goal is sustainable urbanization created by cities and regions that provide citizens with adequate services, security and employment opportunities while limiting their ecological footprint. The *strategic vision* of the Plan is to help create, by 2013, the necessary conditions for international and national efforts to stabilize the growth of slums and to set the stage for the reduction in urban poverty and the reversal of the number of slum-dwellers.

6. The key strategic elements of the Plan are: its focus areas, corresponding result areas and indicators of achievement; an enhanced normative and operational framework for country-level activities; and partnering for pre-investment capacity-building so as to bring pilot initiatives to scale. These elements are closely linked to Millennium Development Goal targets 9, 10 and 11 on sustainable development, water and sanitation, and slum improvement, respectively, of Millennium Development Goal 7.

7. In implementing the Plan, UN-Habitat will concentrate on five mutually reinforcing focus areas: advocacy, monitoring and partnerships; participatory urban planning, management and governance; pro-poor land and housing; environmentally sound and affordable basic infrastructure and services; and strengthening human settlements finance systems. Gender mainstreaming, youth development, and building partnerships in human settlements have been recognized as cross-cutting themes throughout the five thematic focus areas of the Plan.

8. A sixth focus area is excellence in management, focusing on innovation and institutional reform. Key components include results-based monitoring and reporting and a robust knowledge management system. Its objective is to strengthen the contribution of UN-Habitat to United Nations system-wide reform.

9. The enhanced normative and operational framework of the Plan is the principal means by which UN-Habitat intends to align its normative and operational activities at the country level, through combining its advocacy work with support to policy and institutional reform, capacity-building and technical assistance as a pre-investment package for preparing bankable projects for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

10. The enhanced normative and operational framework calls for closer working relations with the United Nations country teams within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process as well as with international financial institutions, including the World Bank, regional development banks, and domestic financial institutions, so as to mobilize follow-up investment at the country level. The key objective of the enhanced normative and operational framework is to mainstream urban poverty and slum improvement within national development strategies and budget allocations. The anticipated outcome is to leverage those strategies and resources with international and domestic capital investment, official development assistance (ODA) and community-led efforts in attaining the human settlements-related internationally agreed development goals.

11. Another major component of the Plan is a resource mobilization and communication strategy designed to consolidate and broaden the existing donor base, and to mobilize non-conventional sources of funding.

12. To this end, the Governing Council called upon the Executive Director of UN-Habitat to establish a process of dialogue with, inter alia, the Committee of Permanent Representatives, on further refining the strategy, including options

adopted by other United Nations bodies for broadening the donor base and, in particular, encouraging non-earmarked contributions (resolution 21/2, para. 2).

13. Although the implementation of the Plan is scheduled to begin in 2008, several measures are already being taken to produce an action plan for the implementation of the Plan by the fourth quarter of 2007.

14. An important recommendation contained in resolution 21/2 on the Plan is that Member States establish or strengthen broad-based national UN-Habitat committees, initially established for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), or other participatory bodies to promote the implementation of the enhanced normative and operational framework in their respective countries.

B. Strengthening the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation

15. On 20 July 2006, the Secretary-General's promulgated the revised edition of the special annex for the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation[7] to the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations,[8] and called for the preparation of corresponding operational procedures and guidelines. UN-Habitat thereafter prepared a policy framework and draft guidelines and submitted them to its Governing Council for its policy consideration.

16. The Governing Council at its twenty-first session took note of the revised edition of the special annex for the Foundation and the draft guidelines, and requested the Executive Director to introduce reimbursable seeding operations on an experimental basis for an initial four-year period.

17. In so doing, the Governing Council of UN-Habitat enabled the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation to perform for the first time modest lending operations for which it had been originally established. Such operations also provide UN-Habitat with the means to complement its policy, advocacy and technical cooperation activities with financial instruments designed to empower the poor through access to housing finance. Such instruments fill a major gap in efforts to provide affordable housing which heretofore have been limited to facilitating access by the poor to basic infrastructure and services, and appropriate building materials and technology. Combining the use of such instruments with other policy and institutional arrangements for combating poverty will also enable Member States and the international community to achieve more tangible results and impact by leveraging short-term microcredit efforts with the longer-term finance required for infrastructure and land development.

18. UN-Habitat over the next four years will work closely with partners at the international and country levels to extend finance capital through domestic financial institutions, which will, in turn, on-lend these funds together with additional leveraged private capital for the purposes of financing affordable housing and urban infrastructure.

19. UN-Habitat will work in partnerships with international and domestic financial institutions to design, field-test and scale up lending operations. Participation of

[7] ST/SGB/2006/8.
[8] ST/SGB/2003/7.

international and regional financial institutions will ensure that local partners that successfully utilize the experimental reimbursable seeding operations of the Foundation will be considered seriously for larger follow-up investment.

20. The Governing Council of UN-Habitat at its twenty-first session adopted three other related resolutions, one (entitled "Sustainable public-private partnership incentives for attracting large-scale private-sector investment in low-income housing") on catalysing private sector participation in the provision of infrastructure and affordable housing (resolution 21/7); one on the Africa fund/financing mechanism on slum prevention and upgrading (resolution 21/8); and one on women's land and property rights and access to finance (resolution 21/9).

21. In recognizing that the formal private sector housing market in most developing countries and countries with economies in transition mainly caters for upper-middle- and high-income groups, the Governing Council of UN-Habitat called upon Governments to encourage and catalyse private-sector participation in the provision of infrastructure and affordable housing, particularly through incentives, enabling policies and legislation.

22. At the regional level, the Governing Council took note of the proposal of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development to establish an earmarked African fund/financing mechanism for participatory slum prevention and upgrading, to be administered by UN-Habitat in collaboration with the executive secretariat of the Conference, and called upon UN-Habitat to support the executive secretariat of the Conference in preparing a feasibility study on the establishment of an African fund for slum prevention and upgrading.

23. The implementation of women's rights to land, property and housing remains a formidable challenge facing the world today. In its resolution 21/9, focused on providing new guidelines aimed at improving women's land and property rights and access to finance, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director, in implementing the Habitat Agenda, to promote access to finance by low-income women, either as individuals, in cooperatives or in other associated forms, as a major contribution to the overall implementation of the Habitat Agenda and to urban poverty reduction. Furthermore, it urged Governments and their development partners to support women's land access trusts, housing cooperatives and other women's organizations, including grass-roots organizations, in order that women's access to land, housing, housing finance, and security of tenure may be achieved.

C. Other important resolutions adopted by the Governing Council

24. Local authorities have been recognized by the Habitat Agenda as key actors in its implementation. The United Nations Millennium Declaration,[9] the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation")[10] and the 2005 World Summit Outcome[11] further

[9] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[10] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[11] See General Assembly resolution 60/1.

underscored the role and contribution of local authorities to the attainment of internationally agreed development goals.

25. As noted above, the Governing Council at its twenty-first session adopted resolution 21/3 entitled "Guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities", which represents a breakthrough, heralding a decade of intense consultations with Member States, local authorities and their associations and other Habitat Agenda partners.

26. The main objective of the guidelines (as set out in the annex to the progress report of the Executive Director on cooperation with local authorities and other Habitat partners (HSP/GC/21/2/Add.2)) is to support legislative reform where necessary and appropriate, and to serve as a catalyst for policy and institutional reform, so as to further enable and empower local authorities to improve urban governance in the context of attaining the human settlements-related internationally agreed development goals.

27. The guidelines outline the main principles underlying the democratic, constitutional and administrative aspects of local governance and decentralization and also provide a flexible framework that takes into consideration different State forms and traditions so as to facilitate the process of national adaptation.

28. In a related resolution (21/4), entitled "Guiding principles on access to basic services for all", the Governing Council of UN-Habitat acknowledged that access to basic services, such as water and sanitation, constituted a critical contribution to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, to overall reduction of poverty and to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. It endorsed the seminal work of UN-Habitat in formulating guiding principles for access to basic services for all and encouraged their further development and also recommended that the Economic and Social Council consider the issue of basic services for all with a view to promoting the use of the guiding principles among United Nations bodies.

29. In its resolution 21/6, entitled "Urban youth development", the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, in recognizing that youth, who constituted a high proportion of world's population, were inordinately affected by the problems of unemployment and unsustainable urban development, called upon the Executive Director of UN-Habitat to establish a special fund within the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation designed to support youth-led initiatives in pursuance of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

30. The Governing Council of UN-Habitat duly noted the fact that Arctic regions constitute one of the most fragile ecosystems of the world and are inhabited by vulnerable indigenous populations. In its resolution 21/5, entitled "Sustainable development of Arctic human settlements", the Governing Council called upon the Executive Director to strengthen collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), other United Nations bodies, the Arctic Council and other existing networks of circumpolar cooperation in promoting the Habitat Agenda for the sustainable development of human settlements in the Arctic region.

III. Global and regional consultative processes

A. World Urban Forum

31. The World Urban Forum was established by the General Assembly[12] as an advisory body to the Executive Director and as a platform where Habitat Agenda partners could engage in open dialogue and the exchange of lessons learned from experience in tackling some of the most pressing social, economic and environmental problems associated with urbanization.

32. The third session of the World Urban Forum was held in Vancouver, Canada, from 19 to 23 June 2006, with the participation of over 10,000 representatives of Governments, local authorities and their associations, civil society organizations, professional associations, academia and research, and the private sector. The Forum has been established as the world's premier nexus for the exchange of knowledge, expertise and solutions in respect of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the attainment of the human settlements-related Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals and targets.

33. The outcome of the third session of the Forum was the basis for the theme of the twenty-first session of the Governing Council, namely, "Sustainable urbanization: local action for urban poverty reduction, with an emphasis on finance and planning".

34. The key issues arising from the Forum also guided the preparation of, and provided substantive inputs to, the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013. Indeed, the substantive focus areas of the Plan — advocacy, monitoring and partnerships; participatory urban planning, management and governance; pro-poor land and housing; environmentally sound and affordable basic infrastructure and services; and strengthening human settlements finance systems — are designed in part to respond operationally to the issues that arose from the third session of the Forum and its call for turning ideas into action.

35. The fourth session of the Forum will be hosted by the Government of China and held in the City of Nanjing from 13 to 17 October 2008. The theme of the session will be "Harmonious urbanization".

36. In light of the projection that the current year will be a turning point in the history of this planet, marking the shift in human habitation from predominantly rural to predominantly urban, one of the key areas of focus of the Forum will be on ways and means of balancing urbanization with social equity and harmony, and environmental sustainability.

37. Starting with the fourth session of the Forum, and in line with the enhanced catalytic role of UN-Habitat as called for by the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan, a central objective of the Forum will be to take stock of the progress made and lessons learned by Habitat Agenda partners in attaining the overarching goal of sustainable urbanization.

---

[12] See General Assembly resolution 56/206 of 21 December 2001 entitled "Strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)", sect. I B, para. 3.

B. Ministerial Conferences on Housing and Urban Development

38. UN-Habitat, in partnership with the Government of India through its Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, held the first Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development in New Delhi in December 2006. The Conference was attended by 37 countries, regional organizations, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and other United Nations organizations.

39. The Conference adopted the Delhi Declaration, which provides the countries in the region with a new vision for managing rapid urbanization, sustaining economic growth and overcoming inequities, as well as the Enhanced Framework of Implementation for Sustainable Urbanization in Asia and the Pacific. This Framework will provide the basis for the re-examination by countries of their national-, provincial- and local-level policies and strategies for implementing the Habitat Agenda and the attainment of human settlements-related Millennium Development Goals.

40. The Conference agreed to transform itself into a standing consultative body aimed at promoting sustainable housing and urban development in the Asia-Pacific region.

41. The African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development continued to serve as an advocacy and consultative mechanism for African Governments in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. A special session was held in Nairobi during the Africities Summit in September 2006. As indicated above, this session provided the impetus for the adoption by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat of resolution 21/8 on the Africa fund/financing mechanism on slum prevention and upgrading.

42. UN-Habitat and the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development, in collaboration with the African Union, the Municipal Development Partnership, and the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa, further committed to joining in efforts to facilitate the dissemination and adaptation in Africa of the guidelines on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities approved by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat in its resolution 21/3. The first regional conference on this issue is scheduled to take place in late 2007.

C. Commission on Sustainable Development

43. UN-Habitat worked closely with the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and other bodies in organizing the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development held in April and May 2007. UN-Habitat presented lessons derived from best practices and made substantive contributions on the issues of energy for sustainable urban development; air pollution in cities; and climate change.

44. Major emphasis was placed on highlighting access to energy by the urban and peri-urban poor and on recommending widespread slum electrification programmes, and promotion of new and renewable energy applications for providing better access to basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity and cooking fuel.

45. The events organized by UN-Habitat focused on more energy-efficient and renewable energy options for better delivery of affordable and reliable water and sanitation services to poor people living in urban settlements. UN-Habitat also undertook a review of current knowledge and identified gaps in water and sanitation services provision. The meeting presented the Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative as providing a case study on assessing how renewable energy can improve access to pro-poor basic public services.

D. Collaboration with the regional commissions and other United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies

46. The *State of the World's Cities Report 2006-2007: The Millennium Development Goals and Urban Sustainability — 30 Years of Shaping the Habitat Agenda*[13] provided, for the first time, empirical evidence of the scale and scope of urban poverty and deprivation. The report highlighted several new findings including the fact that the urban poor are just as likely to suffer from malnutrition, poor health and disease as their rural counterparts. The *Report* further revealed that the rate of urban growth is virtually equivalent to that of slum formation. Despite regional variations, these trends imply that the vast majority of people migrating to or born in cities are joining the ranks of the urban poor.

47. These and other findings provide compelling evidence that the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals will depend to a significant extent on the ability of Member States to manage the process of urbanization.

48. The focus of the collaboration with the regional commissions is to strengthen the capacity of Member States in respect of developing monitoring systems designed to collect and analyse data on urban trends and issues. UN-Habitat is currently organizing subregional training programmes for over 80 national statistical offices in close collaboration with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), ESCAP and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in their respective regions.

49. Another major observation of the *State of the World's Cities Report 2006-2007* was that prevailing statistical analyses at the city level tend to mask the true extent of urban poverty and deprivation owing to, inter alia, the erroneous assumption that the urban poor, by virtue of their proximity to urban infrastructure and services, have better access than the rural poor to basic infrastructure and services.

50. This observation led UN-Habitat to team up with ESCAP and ECLAC in the development of urban indicators at the sub-city level able to better inform public policies at the national and city levels regarding poverty reduction strategies. Similar support is being provided to the Executive Committee of the Assembly of Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Development Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean in conducting research on land management and social housing aimed at guiding the debates at the annual meeting of the Assembly of Ministers.

51. UN-Habitat is also leading the process of the preparation of the first State of African Cities Report in which at least 50 African cities will be profiled. The report

[13] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.06.III.Q.3.

will highlight some of the critical urban issues affecting the region, including the role of cities in African economic growth and social development; trends in urban poverty and environmental sustainability including urban transport and energy; housing conditions, slums, land markets and security of tenure; and urban governance. The report will be prepared in cooperation with UNEP, ECA, the World Bank and the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa.

52. The objective of the State of African Cities Report, to be launched at the fourth session of the World Urban Forum, to be held, as noted above, in Nanjing, China, in October 2008, is to inform ongoing efforts by UN-Habitat and other partners to assist 14 African countries[14] in developing housing and urban development policies aiming at improving housing conditions and access to secure tenure and basic services for the urban poor. These efforts include undertaking institutional reforms aimed at revising outdated legal frameworks and norms on urban planning and housing delivery.

53. UN-Habitat provides support to the efforts of ECA to create a regional observatory on women's rights.

54. In Europe, UN-Habitat strengthened its cooperation with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) through its Committee on Housing and Land Management. One major focus of this cooperation is the development of operational activities at country level in line with ECE instruments on housing and national housing profiles.

55. Following the establishment of the UN-Habitat Warsaw Office, which provides advisory services and technical assistance to the countries of the region of South-Eastern Europe, a high-level advisory body on programme and policy matters, composed of government officials responsible for housing and human settlements in the region, was established in February 2007.

56. UN-Habitat and the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, in close consultation with the Governments of the region, also launched the Regional Capacity Strengthening Programme for Urban Development and Housing. The objective of this regional programme is to promote consultations between central and local governments and their partners in the areas of: improved policy and strategy frameworks for the sector; enhanced planning, development control and urban management capacity; strengthening urban revenue bases and investment capacity; and improved formulation capacity of bankable projects.

57. On the inter-agency front, UN-Habitat has been participating in the coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system. It organized on 6 March 2007, in the context of the work of the High-level Committee on Programmes an inter-agency meeting on urbanization, which recommended that a thematic discussion on "urban poverty" or "urbanization: challenges and opportunities" be tabled at a future session of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, in order to ensure a coherent strategic response by the United Nations system to the multifaceted challenges posed by rapid urbanization. The meeting also agreed on arrangements for collaboration by the United Nations organizations on analytical policy work and for their identification of opportunities to strengthen

[14] Including Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Egypt, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, the Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

joint programmes of work on capacity-building for the reduction of urban poverty, including on "localizing the Millennium Development Goals".

E. Africities Summit

58. The Africities Summit, which was held in Nairobi in September 2006, focused on the theme of "Building local coalitions for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in African local governments". Representatives of local and national Governments and other Habitat Agenda partners used the opportunity provided by the Summit to take stock of the implementation of decentralization policies in Africa.

59. Within the framework of a tripartite dialogue facilitated by UN-Habitat, stakeholders exchanged views on the challenges ahead and confirmed their commitment to decentralization as a means of attaining the human settlements-related Millennium Development Goals. They underscored their preparedness to support the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development and existing networks of local authorities in the region, including the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa. They also committed to continue strengthening the capacities of local authorities to address the Millennium Development Goals as a priority area for international cooperation.

F. World Habitat Day celebrations

60. The United Nations has designated the first Monday in October every year as World Habitat Day. This event offers the opportunity to reflect on how we manage our cities in the new millennium. Over 100 towns and cities throughout the world centred their observance of the Day on 2 October 2006 around the theme "Cities, magnets of hope". The main 2006 celebrations were launched in Naples, Italy, and climaxed with a special closing ceremony in Kazan, Russian Federation, two days later. The highlight of the occasions was the presentation by the Building and Social Housing Foundation of the Habitat Scroll of Honour Awards 2006 and the World Habitat Awards.

61. The global observance of World Habitat Day in 2007 will be held in The Hague. Major celebrations will also be held in Monterrey, Mexico. The theme of the Day, which falls on 1 October 2007, is "A safe city is a just city". The theme was chosen with a view to raising awareness and encouraging reflection on the mounting threats to urban safety and social justice, particularly urban crime and violence, forced eviction and insecurity of tenure, as well as natural and human-made disasters.

62. An International Conference on the State of Safety in World Cities will take place from 1 to 5 October 2007 in Monterrey, Mexico, as part of the Monterrey Forum of Cultures. The celebrations in both The Hague and Monterrey will witness the launch of the *Global Report on Human Settlements 2007*[15] whose theme is "Enhancing urban safety and security".

[15] London, Earthscan, 2007.

IV. Working with international and regional financial institutions and other partners

63. UN-Habitat continued to deepen its collaboration with international financial institutions including the World Bank, regional development banks and the European Commission in support of the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

A. Follow-up investment in water and sanitation: working with the African and Asian Development Banks

64. UN-Habitat continues to take the lead in packaging capacity-building technical assistance with domestic and international finance to support efforts by Member States in attaining target 10 of Millennium Development Goal 7, on water and sanitation. This approach is currently being implemented in partnership with the African Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank, with the support of bilateral donors in 19 countries in Africa and Asia, and the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund. In addition to the previously reported agreement signed in 2006 with the African Development Bank to support fast-track investments in pro-poor gender-sensitive water and sanitation amounting to $540 million, there is to be an expansion of the memorandum of understanding with the Asian Development Bank by a further $1 billion, with a strong focus on sanitation. This will also be linked to the Asian Development Bank's Water Financing Programme, which covers five countries: India and Viet Nam (already covered under the present work focus of the Water for Asian Cities programme) and Pakistan, Indonesia and the Philippines (to be considered as potential Water for Asian Cities expansion countries).

65. Following the launch of the "Hashimoto Action Plan: Compendium of Actions" (A/C.2/61/4, annex I) in Mexico City in March 2006, UN-Habitat was requested by the Secretary-General to take the lead in the implementation of the Water Operators Partnerships initiative. In response, UN-Habitat has initiated a number of activities, including supporting the establishment of regional Water Operators Partnerships in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Arab States, and identifying a number of substantive and financial partners. It has also established a Global Water Operators Partnership Centre within its offices. In addition, UN-Habitat has developed a framework for the Global Water Operators Partnerships Alliance to be officially launched at the World Water Week, to be held in Stockholm from 12 to 18 August 2007, by His Royal Highness Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands, Prince of Orange, who is Chair of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation.

66. The Water for African Cities Programme is the first comprehensive initiative to support African countries in effectively managing the growing urban water and sanitation crisis and protecting the continent's threatened water resources and aquatic ecosystems against the increasing volume of land-based pollution from the cities. Currently, cities from 14 countries[16] are involved in the Programme. The

[16] These are Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Accra (Ghana), Addis Ababa, Harar and Dire Dawa (Ethiopia), Yaoundé, Douala and Edea (Cameroon), Maputo (Mozambique), Kampala (Uganda), Nairobi (Kenya), Lusaka (Zambia), Kigali (Rwanda), Jos (Nigeria), Bamako (Mali), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), Dar es Salaam (United Republic of Tanzania) and Dakar (Senegal).

start-up and project formulation phase processes begun in 2004-2005 have been completed and implementation is ongoing in a number of countries. Apart from the strategic partnership with the African Development Bank through which the African Development Fund together with UN-Habitat will provide grants to the value of about $217 million over the next five years, there has been a similar arrangement made with the World Bank WaTSaN programme in Ethiopia where $60 million has been earmarked for interventions designed to target the urban poor.

67. The Water for Asian Cities Programme represents a collaborative initiative between UN-Habitat and the Asian Development Bank. It addresses the issues of pro-poor urban water governance, urban water demand management, integrated urban environmental sanitation, and income-generation for the urban poor through community-based water and sanitation services. The Programme is currently engaged in providing pro-poor water and sanitation in China, India, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal with investments totalling over $280 million. Several initiatives are currently being undertaken for improvement of water and sanitation through strategic partnerships with the Asian Development Bank, various national-, State- and city-level governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies, national and international non-governmental organizations, etc.

68. UN-Habitat has embarked on a comprehensive initiative to attain target 10 of Millennium Development Goal 7 within the next four- or five-year period in the Lake Victoria transboundary ecosystem, which is shared by Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. The initiative mobilizes investments to support pro-poor water, sanitation, solid waste management and infrastructure in 15 secondary urban centres, affecting the living conditions, health and nutrition of 595,000 people. It also seeks to reduce the environmental impact of urbanization in the Lake Victoria Basin. The initiative is adopting a phased approach by separating investment into immediate and long-term interventions. This will allow for quick-impact actions to improve water and sanitation provision while planning for longer-term investments. It represents a new and replicable model for attaining the Millennium Development Goals in small urban centres.

69. The Mekong Region Water and Sanitation Initiative aims to improve the living conditions of the urban poor in the Region's rapidly growing economic corridor. The initiative focuses on pro-poor water and sanitation investments in secondary towns. It includes institutional and human resource development; the strengthening of capacities of the local private sector in service delivery; the reduction of environmental impacts of urbanization at local level; and the support of economic development through improved water and sanitation and related income-generating activities. Various fast-track community-based water and sanitation projects are ongoing in India, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Viet Nam and Yunnan Province of China in partnership with local utilities.

B. Mobilizing domestic capital through the Slum Upgrading Facility

70. The Slum Upgrading Facility pilot programme continued to intensify its field-testing work in four pilot countries — Ghana, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the United Republic of Tanzania. There continues to be enthusiastic involvement by the private sector commercial banking community in all four countries in complementing actions taken by the four Governments in preparing realistic "bankable" slum

upgrading projects. In this context, the Slum Upgrading Facility is, for the first time, incorporating a significant element of private lending into pro-poor upgrading projects.

71. The key to progress has been the recognition by Governments and the private banks of the action taken by the slum-dwellers themselves in designing upgrading initiatives that are both appropriate and affordable with respect to their means, as demonstrated by the slum-dwellers' community savings schemes which are at the heart of the business plans for the upgrading projects. These contributions, as expected, do not cover the entire costs of upgrading, as they cannot meet the capital-intensive investment requirements for infrastructure and the servicing of land. Complementary inputs by local governments, service providers and non-governmental organizations are therefore essential to the business plan. The Slum Upgrading Facility is thus demonstrating that slum upgrading operations can be very similar to conventional housing development schemes. The key to their success lies in bringing the multiple actors and stakeholders together in order that they may undertake concerted actions and recognize the efforts of slum-dwellers and of their various associations and social organizations as constituting a tangible asset and contribution to upgrading. The lessons learned from these pilot schemes will be highlighted at the fourth session of the World Urban Forum in Nanjing in 2008.

72. The progress already achieved and the knowledge gained by the Slum Upgrading Facility on access to credit for slum-dwellers have been shared widely. In addition to the dialogue on finance held during the twenty-first session of the Governing Council, similar discussions have been held at various international forums such as the Global Urban Summit: Innovations for an Urban World, held by the Rockefeller Foundation in Bellagio, Italy, in July 2007, and the meeting of the United Nations Advisers Group on Inclusive Financial Sectors, held in Nairobi on 27 June 2007 in conjunction with the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor and the United Nations Capital Development Fund. A greater degree of understanding is emerging on how these organizations in their various roles can help fill the gaps in affordable housing finance for slum-dwellers and the urban poor.

C. The Cities Alliance and Cities without Slums

73. UN-Habitat continued its collaboration with the World Bank within the framework of the Cities Alliance to develop, and assist in the preparation of, city development strategies in Asia, Latin America, Africa and countries with economies in transition.

74. The reporting period witnessed an expansion of activities in Africa including the launch of a City Development Strategy in Lomé where the national reconciliation process is now consolidated and where partnership with international organizations has restarted. Other new initiatives in the region include city development strategies in Benin, Mali, the United Republic of Tanzania and Kenya.

75. In Timor-Leste, UN-Habitat is supporting the development of urban development strategies, while in Mongolia a project has been set up designed to implement a participatory urban upgrading strategy in conjunction with broad-based policy dialogue and reform.

76. At the regional level, UN-Habitat initiated work in West and Central Africa through a City without Slums programme, while in Central America the agency is actively supporting the formulation of improved urban policies and legislation.

D. Working with the European Commission

77. UN-Habitat continued to strengthen its cooperation with the European Commission in the field of sustainable urban development. The Commission's commitment to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, with a particular focus on poverty eradication, provides a solid basis for cooperation in promoting adequate shelter for all and urban environmental sustainability, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Memorandums of understanding signed with both the Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and the European Commission have enabled UN-Habitat to develop concrete actions for urban poverty reduction in the countries belonging to the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States.

E. The Global Land Tool Network

78. There are few more contentious and complex problems in the world than those dealing with land and secure tenure. Every Government faces the challenge of land administration saddled with its own vast array of laws, religious norms, cultural traditions and administrative practices. In many countries, these norms, processes and practices work against women's owning land. In wealthy countries, land records cover most of the territory and are generally well kept. Few developing countries, however, have more than 30 per cent of their land accounted for by land records. In post-conflict societies, land is a key issue, as it is often closely associated with conflict. Sound land governance approaches are therefore primary in building peace and social stability.

79. The Global Land Tool Network is an emerging international network hosted by UN-Habitat that aims to take a more holistic approach to land issues. Its goal is to support people, at national and local levels, in the use of "land tools" that are "pro-poor", "gendered" and "scalable".

80. The Network's objectives are: to improve and develop pro-poor land management as well as land tenure tools; unblock existing initiatives; assist in strengthening existing land networks; improve global coordination on land issues; assist in the development of gendered tools that are affordable and useful to grass-roots organizations; and improve the general dissemination of knowledge on how to implement security of tenure.

81. The official launch of the Network took place at the third session of the World Urban Forum in Vancouver, Canada, in June 2006. The Network has since grown to include over 20 partner institutions, most of which are also networks. International organizations that are partners to this endeavour include the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), ECA and the World Bank. Other partners represent civil society organizations, human rights organizations, slum-dwellers' associations, grass-roots women's organizations, bilateral donors and the Millennium Challenge Corporation of the United States of America.

82. Within the framework of the Global Land Tool Network, UN-Habitat is working with the ECA, the African Union and the African Development Bank to develop land indicators for Africa. These indicators will support a land policy framework through which to guide the work of these institutions in carrying out their respective mandates and missions. The framework and indicators will be taken up at the level of Heads of States by mid-2008.

83. Also, within the framework of the Global Land Tool Network, UN-Habitat is working with the World Bank in reviewing the Bank's global land projects with a view to strengthening its work in the coming decades and enabling it to mainstream pro-poor urban land approaches and tools into its lending operations.

F. Working with the private sector

84. A multi-stakeholder Task Force has been established to implement Governing Council resolution 21/7 entitled "Sustainable public-private partnership incentives for attracting large-scale private-sector investment in low-income housing". The resolution called upon Governments, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to encourage and catalyse private-sector participation in the provision of infrastructure and affordable housing, particularly through incentives, enabling policies and legislation.

85. The Task Force has embraced a wider understanding of sustainable public-private partnerships incentives, going beyond the conventional notion of such partnerships to address the wider policy settings that enable housing markets to contribute to a more efficient and effective investment climate for private businesses and citizens. Catalysing private investments at a large scale for affordable housing requires proactive and conducive government policies in combination with targeted subsidies for defined income groups.

86. The Task Force will develop guidelines to assist Governments in working towards implementation of the resolution. By involving a wide range of Habitat Agenda partners, including small, medium and large businesses, local authorities, citizens' groups and community-based organizations, the Task Force will, in its work, encompass the social, economic and environmental dimensions of affordable housing.

87. In April 2007, UN-Habitat established the Business Partnership for Sustainable Urbanization, a strategic alliance of business partners including foundations and other private sector partners working towards sustainable urbanization. The Partnership was launched two days prior to the start of the twenty-first session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat and includes over 300 participating companies, enterprises and foundations.

88. An agreement was reached for the Business Partnership for Sustainable Urbanization to serve as a platform for the building by interested partners of a private sector network for the exchange of good business practices and models in the sectors of construction, housing finance, water and sanitation, energy, transport, disaster management and reconstruction, information technology and training.

89. The Task Force will focus its efforts on, inter alia, strengthening the role of UN-Habitat in brokering and promoting dialogue between various partners to help

them take concrete actions centring around pressing urbanization issues in their respective towns and cities.

G. Engaging civil society

90. Almost all programmes of UN-Habitat have mainstreamed their partnerships with civil society organizations and there is substantive cooperation of those programmes with major civil society networks at the global, national and local levels aimed at supporting their active engagement in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

91. UN-Habitat continued its collaboration with the Environmental Youth Alliance in organizing the World Youth Forum: Bringing Together Youth Leaders of Today and Tomorrow, which was held two days prior to the third session of the World Urban Forum. The World Youth Forum brought together 400 youth and their leaders from over 40 countries to share best practices centred around youth-led projects and programmes in improving the living environment. It provided a chance for young people to meet, share perspectives, showcase their projects, build networks and prepare for their substantive participation in the third session of the World Urban Forum.

92. In June 2007, UN-Habitat co-hosted with the Non-Governmental Liaison Service, UNEP and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a meeting in Nairobi of non-governmental organization focal points within the United Nations system, regional bodies and international financial institutions.

93. In October 2006, a workshop of stakeholders on the legal empowerment of the poor was held in Kenya. The meeting was convened in preparation for the Kenya meeting of the Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor which was held later, in November 2006, and co-organized by UNDP, UNEP and UN-Habitat.

94. A number of cooperation agreements were signed with youth organizations during the reporting period in order to identify and strengthen areas of cooperation. These agreements form part of the Global Partnership Initiative on Urban Youth Development in Africa, which acknowledges the need to meaningfully involve and engage young people at the city level in creating enabling environments in which they could take action. Participating organizations, to date, include YouthBuild, the Environmental Youth Alliance, the Global Forum, BURO (Oslo Youth Council) and Computer Aid International. The first African Summit of Civil Society Organizations, organized by UN-Habitat in cooperation with MWENGO, an African network of civil society organizations, was held in Nairobi in January 2007.

V. Strengthening coordinated humanitarian response and sustainable reconstruction

95. The reporting period witnessed the graduation of several emergency response initiatives from early humanitarian response to capacity-building and policy work. This has notably been the case in Indonesia, Iraq, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Sudan and Somalia where initial projects devoted to relief have now graduated to new initiatives focusing on institution-building, the revision of building codes and by-laws, land-use planning and management systems, and policy development and

reform. These initiatives demonstrate how initial early engagement in post-disaster or post-conflict situations aimed at responding to immediate shelter needs can lead to effective longer-term engagement so as to ensure more sustainable recovery and reconstruction.

96. Building on this experience, UN-Habitat actively participated in various inter-agency mechanisms at both the global and regional levels in order to enhance coordination in responding to both complex emergencies and natural disasters, including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the formulation of consolidated appeals processes, flash appeals and common humanitarian action plans. While UN-Habitat is not yet a member of the Standing Committee, it now serves as a focal point in three humanitarian clusters: emergency shelter, protection and early recovery. Accordingly, UN-Habitat is working on response strategies for emergency shelter after disasters, shelter needs assessment, post-disaster land tenure guidelines and other activities oriented towards improving the humanitarian response with a view to achieving the early recovery and reconstruction of affected communities.

97. UN-Habitat has increasingly demonstrated its added value to relief and recovery operations with respect to providing a bridge from humanitarian relief to more sustainable recovery, reconstruction and capacity-building. While UN-Habitat is not a relief agency, it has a demonstrated complementary role in assuring that relief and recovery are durable and sustainable. UN-Habitat has been called upon to assume a focal-point role for "housing, land and property" in the new humanitarian response system driven by the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. This emerging collaboration with humanitarian agencies should be strengthened to promote system-wide capacity and response to the shelter-related gaps in the current humanitarian system.

VI. Financial and budgetary matters

A. Resource mobilization

98. At its twenty-first session, the Governing Council of UN-Habitat approved the Resource Mobilization Strategy of UN-Habitat as part of the organization's Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2009. It called for further efforts to refine the strategy including options for widening the resource base of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation. In addition, the Governing Council endorsed a provision of $15 million for kick-starting the implementation of the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan and for the mobilization of resources by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for the Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operations in support of pro-poor housing. A resource mobilization unit is being established to consolidate and streamline resource mobilization efforts.

99. The reporting period saw an overall increase of 10 per cent in the total voluntary contributions received by UN-Habitat, from $111.4 million in 2005 to $126.0 million in 2006. Of the total voluntary contributions received in 2006, $54.6 million was directed towards the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation and $71.4 millions towards technical cooperation activities at the country level. The aggressive fund-raising efforts of the organization to

capitalize the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, the Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian People, and the Slum Upgrading Facility have yielded positive results. At the end of 2006, multi-year agreements had been signed with various donors, totalling $57.1 million directed towards the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, $1.2 million towards the Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian People and $20.1 million towards the Slum Upgrading Facility. This trend is expected to continue with the multi-year funding targeting the five focus areas of the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan.

B. Balance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions

100. Although there has been an increase in the total voluntary contributions received directed towards the Foundation, non-earmarked contributions remained at the $10 million mark, reflecting a donor preference for earmarked resources. Both non-earmarked and earmarked contributions contribute towards meeting the overall objectives of the Programme. However, the continued imbalance in funding has created difficulties in ensuring an effective and efficient implementation of the approved work programme, leading to a distortion of programme priorities.

101. The Programme remains in a vulnerable position, with 90 per cent of non-earmarked resources being received from 10 donors. One of the key strategies of the Resource Mobilization Strategy of the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan will be to broaden the donor base of UN-Habitat and to increase, and correct the imbalance between, the earmarked and non-earmarked resources of the Foundation. The implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Voluntary contributions in United Nations system organizations: impact on programme delivery and resource mobilization strategies" (JIU/REP/2007/1), as regards the non-earmarked contributions will further inform this resource mobilization effort.

C. Regular budget contributions

102. Although the contributions from the regular budget of the United Nations constitute only 10 per cent of the total contributions to UN-Habitat, the organization continues to rely on these contributions as they facilitate the effective implementation of a cohesive, prioritized work programme. They provide for the basic operating infrastructure of the organization and constitute the principal source of funding for core normative activities of the work programme, for which earmarked funding is not imminent. At its sixty-first session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 61/206 of 20 December 2006 entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)", requested the Secretary-General to keep the resource needs of UN-Habitat under review so as to enhance its effectiveness in supporting national policies, strategies and plans in attaining the poverty eradication, gender equality, water and sanitation and slum upgrading targets of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the 2005 World Summit Outcome. The Secretary-General has made appropriate proposals in the context of the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

103. The issues facing human settlements, particularly in rapidly growing slums, are real, and they are complex and urgent. If unaddressed they could become a cause of instability. They affect human beings as well as the natural environment. Addressing those issues requires the collaboration of all parties, at all levels, based on a shared vision.

104. The Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013 and the Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operations in support of pro-poor housing and urban development are pivotal with respect to this vision. The Plan provides a compelling road map for strengthening the role of UN-Habitat as a robust catalyst for the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Its sharpened focus, enhanced normative and operational framework, resource mobilization and communication strategy, and commitment to partnerships, results-based monitoring and reporting and a robust knowledge management system are to be seen as representing a significant contribution to United Nations system-wide reform.

105. The Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operations is designed to fill a long-standing gap in the international financial architecture with respect to supporting access by the poor to housing finance and strengthening the capacity of Governments and local authorities to provide affordable urban infrastructure and basic services. Its implementation, even on an experimental basis, should provide the impetus for the development of innovative financial mechanisms that can make a real difference in supporting efforts by Member States to attain the human settlements-related internationally agreed development goals.

106. Member States are encouraged to create a conducive environment for realizing the main goals of "shelter for all" and "sustainable urbanization" by:

(a) Providing the necessary support and resources to kick-starting the implementation of the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013 with its budget of US$ 15 million for the period 2008-2009;

(b) Concretizing the strengthening of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation by contributing to its Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operations for affordable housing finance as representing a major step forward in supporting the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

(c) Revitalizing or strengthening broad-based national UN-Habitat committees with a view to mainstreaming urban poverty reduction in the national development strategies, developing inclusive sustainable urban development strategies and promoting the implementation of the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework at the country level;

(d) Recommending that the issues of access to basic services for all and sustainable urbanization be included in the high-level discussions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental mechanisms with a view to promoting the guiding principles on access to basic services for all and to further mainstreaming access by the poor to water and sanitation as a key contribution to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.